



The United States Mission to the OSCE

Obersteingasse 11/1 A-1190 Vienna, Austria
Tel: (+43-1) 31339-3401 Fax: (+43-1) 368-6385

Stephan M. Minikes, United States Ambassador to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe



Stephan M. Minikes was nominated by President Bush, confirmed by the U.S. Senate, and on November 29, 2001, was sworn in by Secretary Colin Powell as United States Ambassador to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). He assumed his duties in Vienna on December 4, 2001.

Ambassador Minikes was born in Berlin, Germany, in 1938, and survived WWII there. He lived in Berlin through the Allied Victory and the Blockade, immigrating to the United States in 1949. He has traveled extensively in Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia and is a life-long student of European and Russian affairs. He is fluent in German.

In his present position he has been deeply involved in the security, economic and political issues that are at the heart of the Euro-Atlantic, U.S.-EU, U.S.-Russia and U.S.-Eurasia relationships. Specifically, Ambassador Minikes is engaged daily with 54 other ambassadors representing the area from Vancouver to Vladivostok, addressing a wide range of security-related concerns, including human rights, democratization and economic and environmental issues, conflict prevention, post-conflict rehabilitation, confidence and security-building measures, counter-terrorism and arms control.

Prior to his appointment by President Bush, Ambassador Minikes was for 17 years a partner in the Washington, D.C. office of the national law firm of Thelen Reid & Priest LLP, where he was chairman of the firm's government affairs department and served as the managing partner of the Washington office and a member of the firm's management board. Prior to joining Thelen Reid, Ambassador Minikes established the Washington office of the Houston, Texas law firm of Butler & Binion in 1977, and served as that office's managing partner throughout his tenure with the firm.

Ambassador Minikes' law practice consisted primarily of representing corporations, trade associations, cities, and other governmental entities in matters involving national defense, transportation, government procurement, infrastructure development, international trade and agriculture. He is a well-known member of the Washington political and legal communities and is recognized for his extensive knowledge of international affairs and diplomacy, administrative law, the Executive Branch and Congress.

In 1974, the late William J. Casey asked Ambassador Minikes to join him as senior vice president and a member of the management committee of the Export-Import Bank of the United States. Ambassador Minikes worked on all aspects of export financing and served in those capacities until 1977.

From 1972 to 1974, Ambassador Minikes served in the Pentagon as legal counsel to the Chief of Naval Operations, the late Admiral Elmo R. Zumwalt, Jr., and as a member of his senior advisory staff. During his tenure at the Pentagon, he had a period of service in the White House as counsel to Charles J. DiBona, Special Consultant to the President for Energy, to develop a national energy policy.

Before joining the Department of Defense in 1972, Ambassador Minikes was a corporate, securities and banking lawyer in New York City with the law firms of Milbank, Tweed, Hadley & McCloy and Borden & Ball. He represented underwriters, financial institutions, and public and closely held corporations on corporate, securities law and financing matters. In those capacities, he prepared registration statements, proxy statements, complex loan agreements and other documentation for business transactions.

Ambassador Minikes has lectured on foreign policy, national defense, energy, international trade and finance, and government procurement matters. He is a 1961 graduate of Cornell University and a 1964 graduate of the Yale Law School. He is a member of the bars of the District of Columbia, the State of New York, the U.S. Supreme Court and various Federal courts, and a member of the American Bar Association, the Federal Bar Association, the American Society of International Law and the Association of the Bar of the City of New York.

Ambassador Minikes has served as a director of the Washington Opera at the Kennedy Center, a member of the Executive Committee of the Yale Law School and a member of the board of directors of the American Council on Germany. He has received numerous awards for his professional and civic work and is listed in Who's Who in America. Ambassador Minikes is married and has a daughter.